Chromebook Microphone Not Working: Complete Fix Guide (2026)

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ABSTRACT

This guide addresses the most common causes of microphone failure on Chromebook devices running ChromeOS in 2026, including blocked site permissions in Chrome, incorrect audio input device selection, policy restrictions on managed devices, and hardware faults. Each fix is presented as a discrete, numbered step — beginning with a quick browser-based microphone test and progressing through Chrome permission settings, ChromeOS audio configuration, extension isolation via Guest Mode, system updates, and, as a last resort, a factory reset. A hardware diagnosis section and a concise FAQ are included at the end.

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A Chromebook microphone may stop functioning before a Google Meet or Zoom call, fail to capture audio during a voice recording, or produce silence where input is expected. In the majority of cases, the underlying cause falls into one of three categories: Chrome has blocked microphone access for a specific site, the wrong input device is selected in ChromeOS audio settings, or a permission toggle is disabled. This guide covers every available fix — from a 30-second verification check to a full factory reset — in order of increasing effort.

Quick Reference Checklist

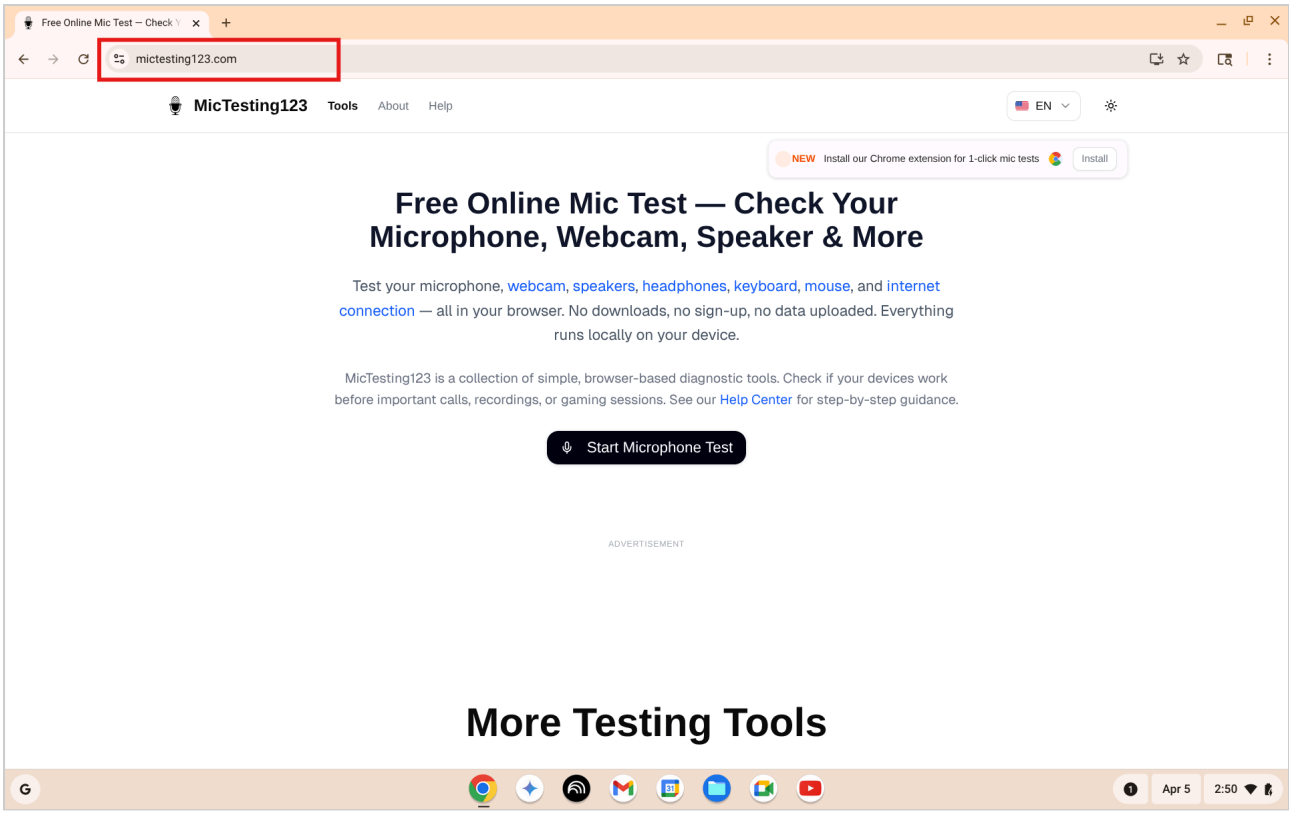
Work through this table first. The majority of issues are resolved within the first two or three steps.

FIX	WHEN TO USE IT	HOW TO DO IT
Test your microphone	Always start here — confirms software vs. hardware	Open mictesting123.com → Start Microphone Test
Allow permission	Chrome requested mic access during your visit	Click *Allow while visiting the site* in the browser popup
Check the lock icon	Permission was previously set to Block or Never allow	Address bar → lock icon → Microphone → Allow
Chrome mic settings	Site is blocked globally in Chrome	`chrome://settings/content/microphone` → remove from blocked list
ChromeOS audio settings	Wrong input device or input volume at zero	Settings → Device → Audio → Input → select correct device and raise volume
System tray audio panel	Quickest way to switch microphone input	Clock → audio row ">" → Input → select correct microphone
Restart Chromebook	After any settings change, or when behaviour is intermittent	Clock → Power → Restart
Keyboard mute key	Microphone muted at hardware level without realising	Press the microphone mute key in the top function row
Guest Mode	Mic works after restart but stops, or extension	Sign out → Browse as Guest → test microphone

FIX	WHEN TO USE IT	HOW TO DO IT
	suspected	
School or work device	Settings are greyed out or mic access is policy-restricted	Contact IT administrator
External microphone	Software fixes exhausted — checking for hardware fault	Connect USB or Bluetooth mic → test at mictesting123.com
Update ChromeOS	Audio regression introduced in an older version	Settings → About ChromeOS → Check for updates
Powerwash	Last resort after all other steps have failed	Settings → System preferences → Reset → Powerwash

1. Test Your Microphone First

Before adjusting any settings, confirm whether the microphone is genuinely non-functional or simply blocked for one particular site. You can verify microphone functionality using a browser-based tool such as https://www.mictesting123.com/. Navigate to the site in Chrome on your Chromebook, then click **Start Microphone Test**.


Free Online Mic Test — Check
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Tools
About
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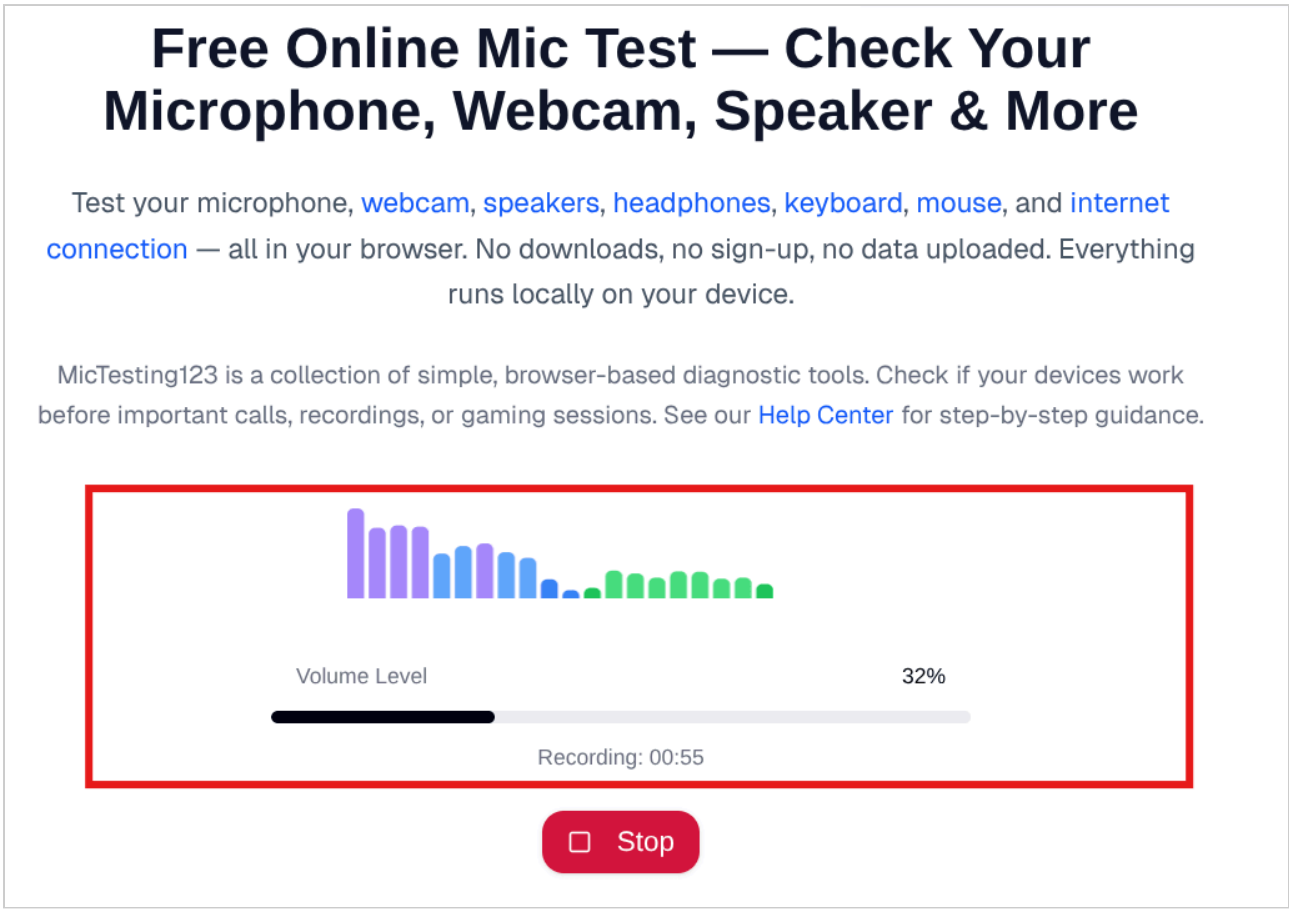
Install our Chrome extension for 1-click mic tests
Install
Free Online Mic Test — Check Your Microphone, Webcam, Speaker & More
Test your microphone, webcam, speakers, headphones, keyboard, mouse, and internet connection — all in your browser. No downloads, no sign-up, no data uploaded. Everything runs locally on your device.
MicTesting123 is a collection of simple, browser-based diagnostic tools. Check if your devices work before important calls, recordings, or gaming sessions. See our Help Center for step-by-step guidance.
Start Microphone Test
ADVERTISEMENT
More Testing Tools
Apr 5
2:50

Open mictesting123.com on your Chromebook. Click Start Microphone Test to begin.

When prompted, click **Allow while visiting the site**. Speak into the built-in microphone and observe the volume bar on screen.


Free Online Mic Test — Check Your Microphone, Webcam, Speaker & More
Test your microphone, webcam, speakers, headphones, keyboard, mouse, and internet connection — all in your browser. No downloads, no sign-up, no data uploaded. Everything runs locally on your device.
MicTesting123 is a collection of simple, browser-based diagnostic tools. Check if your devices work before important calls, recordings, or gaming sessions. See our Help Center for step-by-step guidance.
Volume Level
32%
Recording: 00:55
Stop

If the volume bar moves while you speak, the microphone hardware is functioning — the issue is a permission or settings problem.

Interpreting the result:

- **Volume bar moves** — microphone hardware is functioning. The problem is a permission or settings issue. Continue through this guide.
- **Volume bar does not move** — the microphone is either blocked in Chrome or there is a hardware fault. Proceed to Section 2.
- **Error message on the test page** — Chrome is blocking microphone access for this site. Proceed directly to Section 2.

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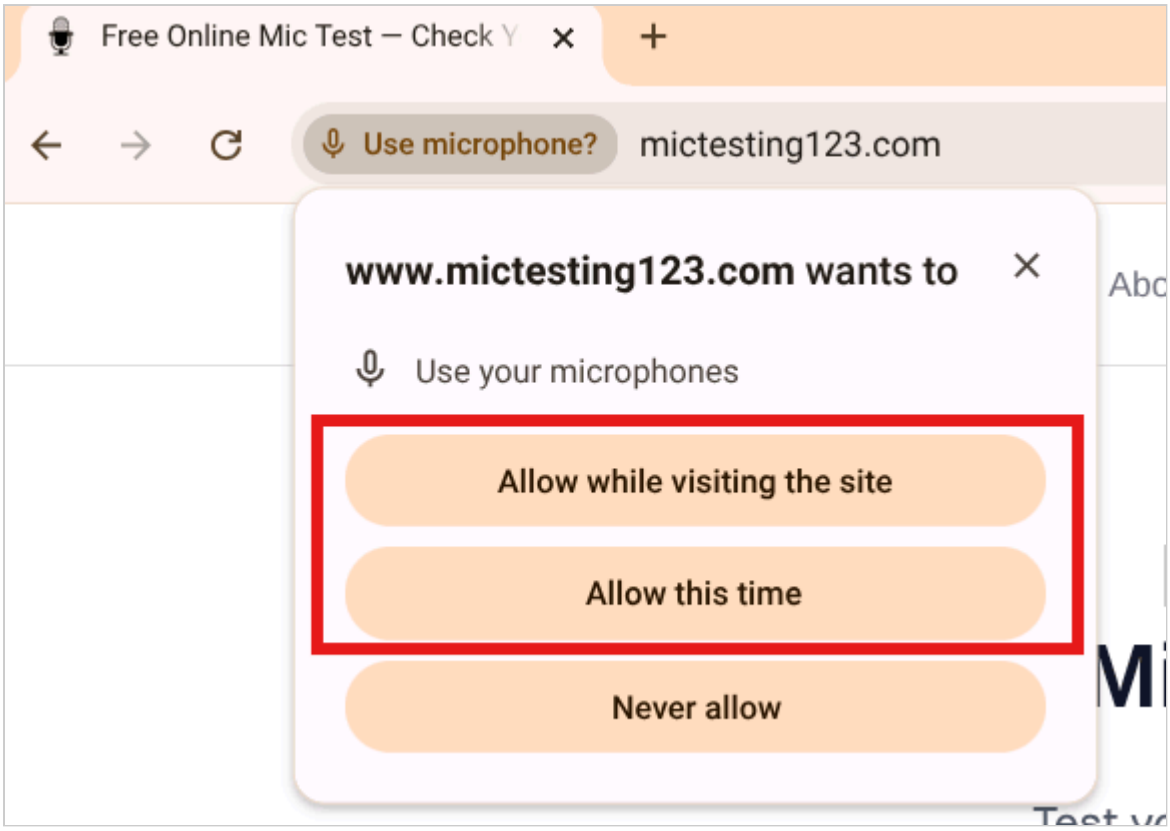
2. Allow Microphone Permission in Chrome

The most frequent cause of Chromebook microphone failure is a blocked or incorrectly set Chrome permission. When a site first requests microphone access, Chrome displays a popup near the address bar with three options.



Chrome asks for microphone access when a site needs it. Select "Allow while visiting the site" for regular use.

- **Allow while visiting the site** — microphone access is granted on each visit
- **Allow this time** — access is granted for the current session only; the prompt reappears on the next visit
- **Never allow** — microphone access is permanently blocked for this site; the permission popup will not appear again automatically

If *Never allow* was selected at any point, the permission must be reset manually. See Section 3 below.

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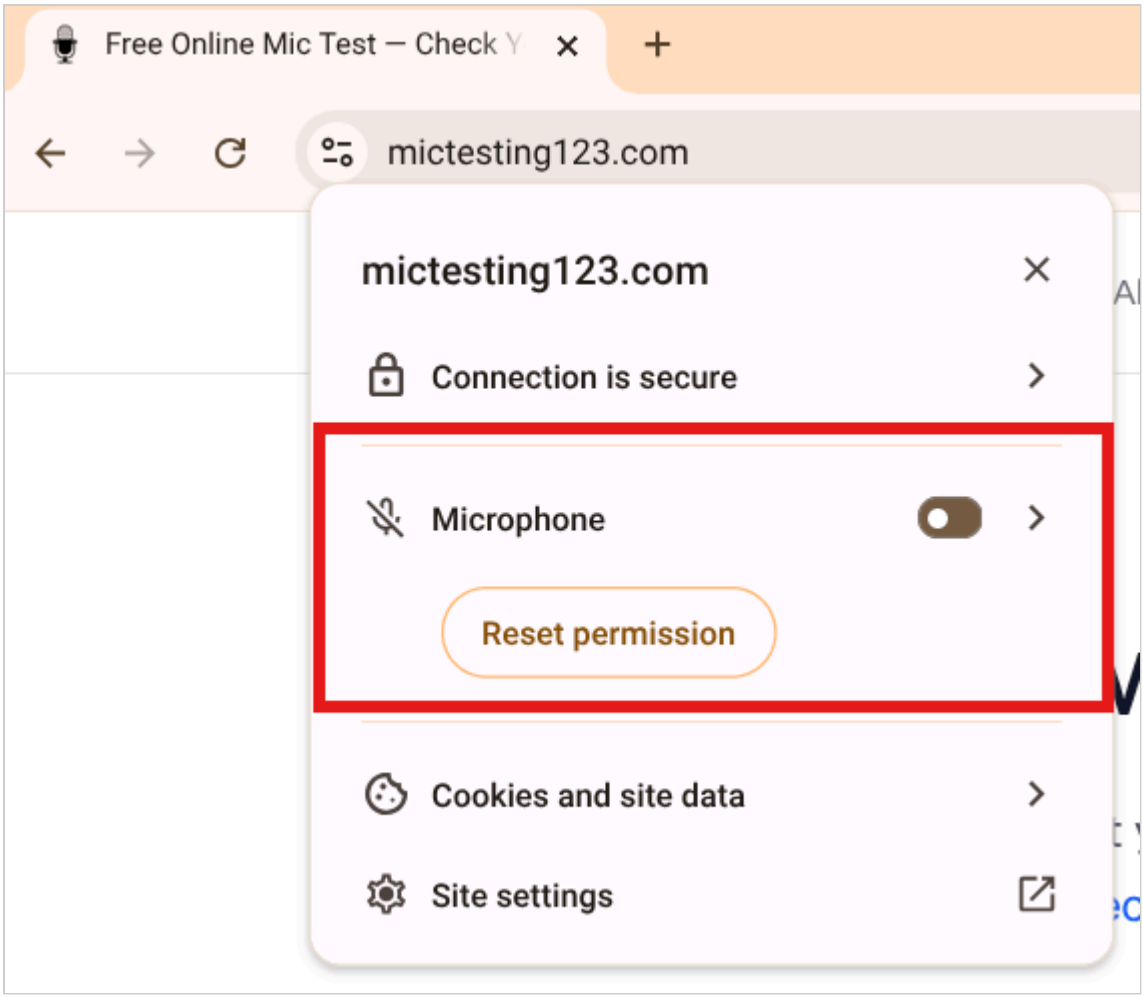
3. Check the Address Bar Lock Icon

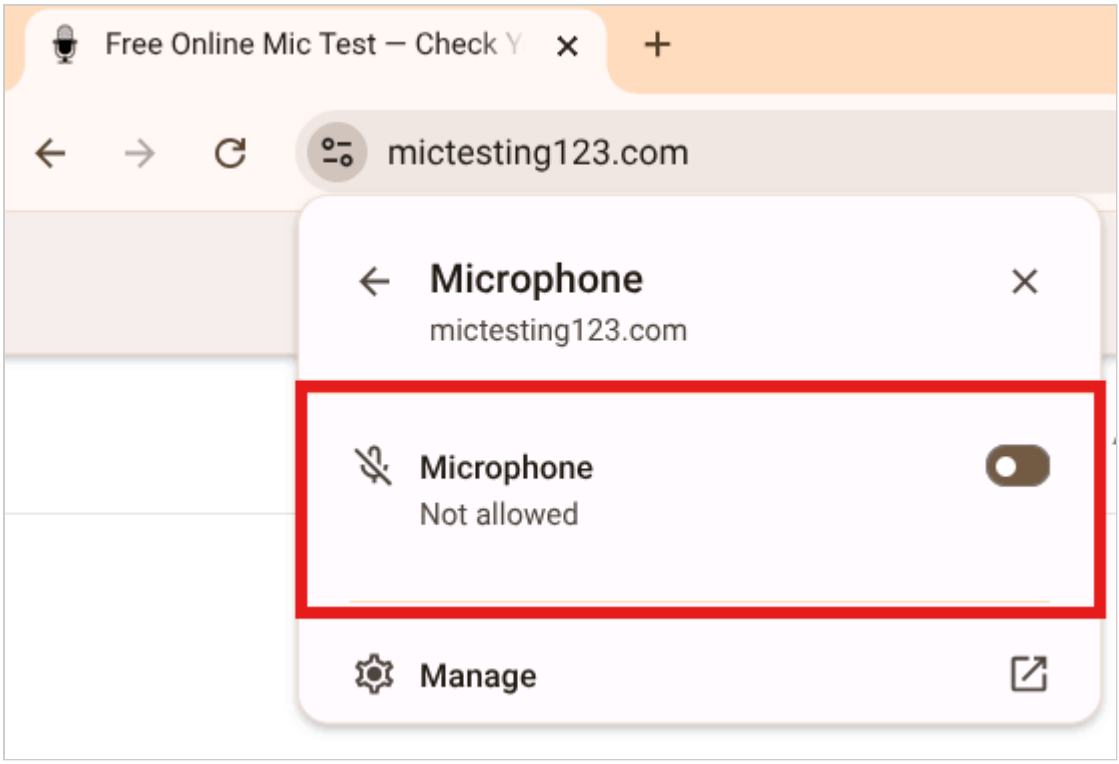
If Chrome has already blocked microphone access for a site, the permission can be corrected directly from the address bar without opening any settings page.

1. Navigate to the site where the microphone is not working.
2. Click the **lock icon** (or the tune/settings icon) to the left of the address bar.
3. Locate **Microphone** in the dropdown list.



Click the lock icon in Chrome's address bar. If you see "Reset permission", the microphone was previously blocked.

4. If it shows *Not allowed* or a strikethrough microphone icon, click the toggle to enable it — or click **Reset permission** to clear the block.
5. Reload the page.



The microphone detail view showing "Not allowed". Toggle it on or reset the permission, then reload the page.

6. When the permission prompt reappears, select **Allow while visiting the site**.

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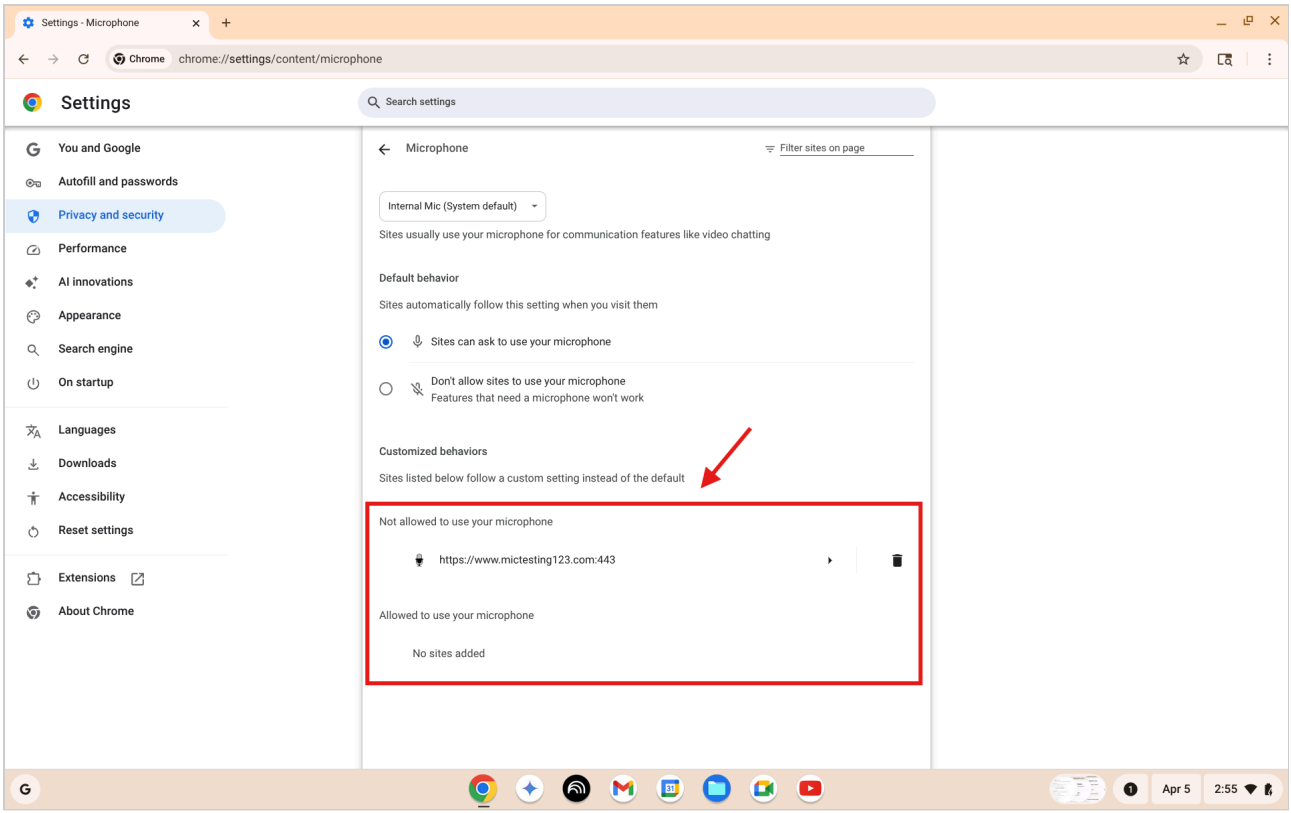
4. Check Chrome Microphone Settings

If the address bar fix did not resolve the issue, the site may be listed on Chrome's global blocked-sites list.

1. In the Chrome address bar, enter: `chrome://settings/content/microphone` and press Enter.
2. Confirm that *Sites can ask to use your microphone* is selected at the top of the page.
3. Under *Not allowed to use your microphone*, check whether the affected site appears. If it does, click the trash icon to remove it.



Chrome microphone settings. Check the "Not allowed to use your microphone" list. If your site appears there, remove it by clicking the trash icon.

4. Under *Default microphone*, confirm that the correct device is selected. The built-in microphone is typically labelled *Internal Mic*.
5. Return to the site and retry — Chrome will request permission again.

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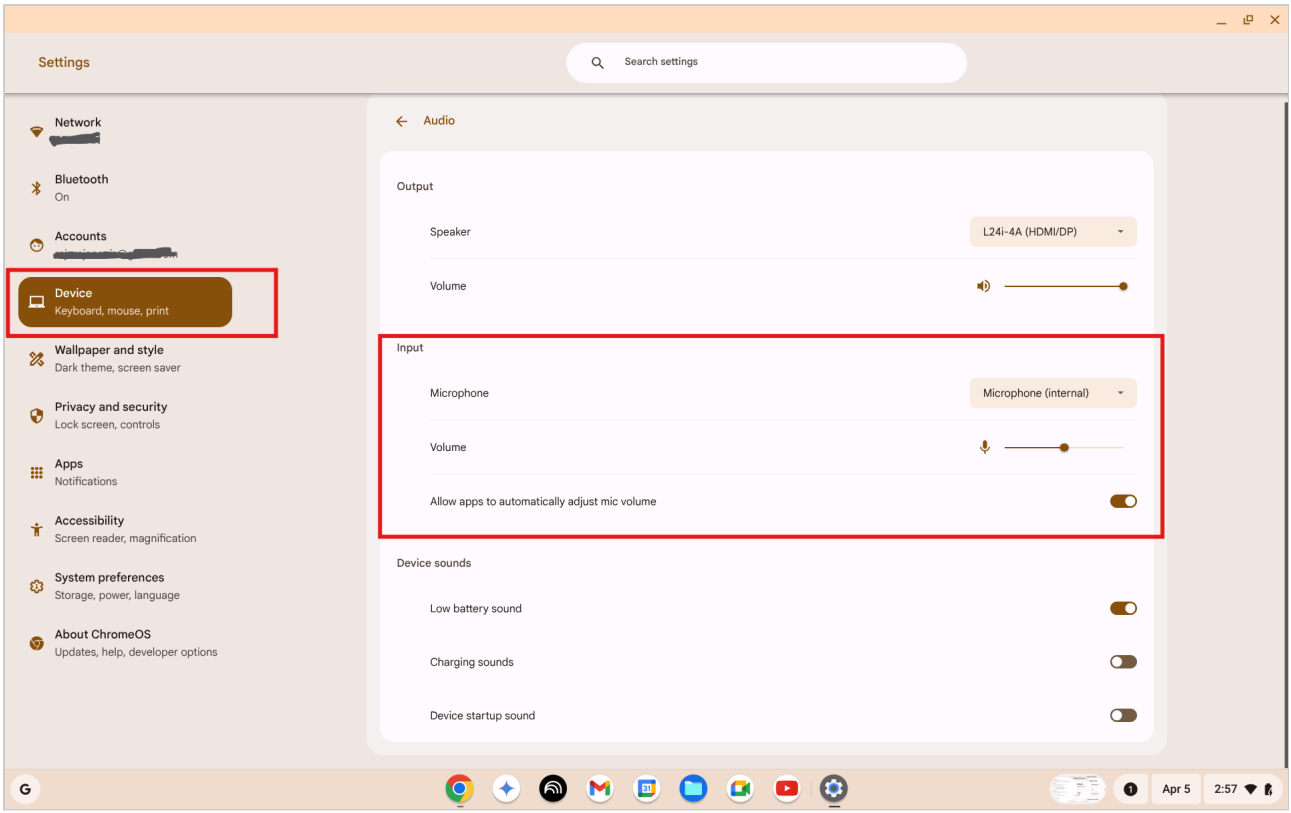
5. Check ChromeOS Audio Settings

If Chrome permissions are correctly configured but the microphone remains non-functional, the issue may be in ChromeOS itself — either the wrong input device is selected, or the microphone volume is set to zero.

1. Click the **clock** in the bottom-right corner of the screen.
2. Click the **gear icon** (Settings) in the system tray panel.
3. In the left panel, select **Device**, then click **Audio**.



ChromeOS Settings → Device → Audio. Check the Input section. Confirm the correct microphone is selected and the volume slider is not at zero.

4. Under **Input**, verify two items:
   - **Microphone dropdown** — should show *Microphone (internal)* for the built-in mic, or the relevant external device if connected.
   - **Volume slider** — must not be at zero. A starting value of approximately 75% is recommended.
5. Speak while observing the input level indicator. If it shows activity, the microphone is being detected.

If no animation appears despite the correct device and volume settings, proceed to Section 6.

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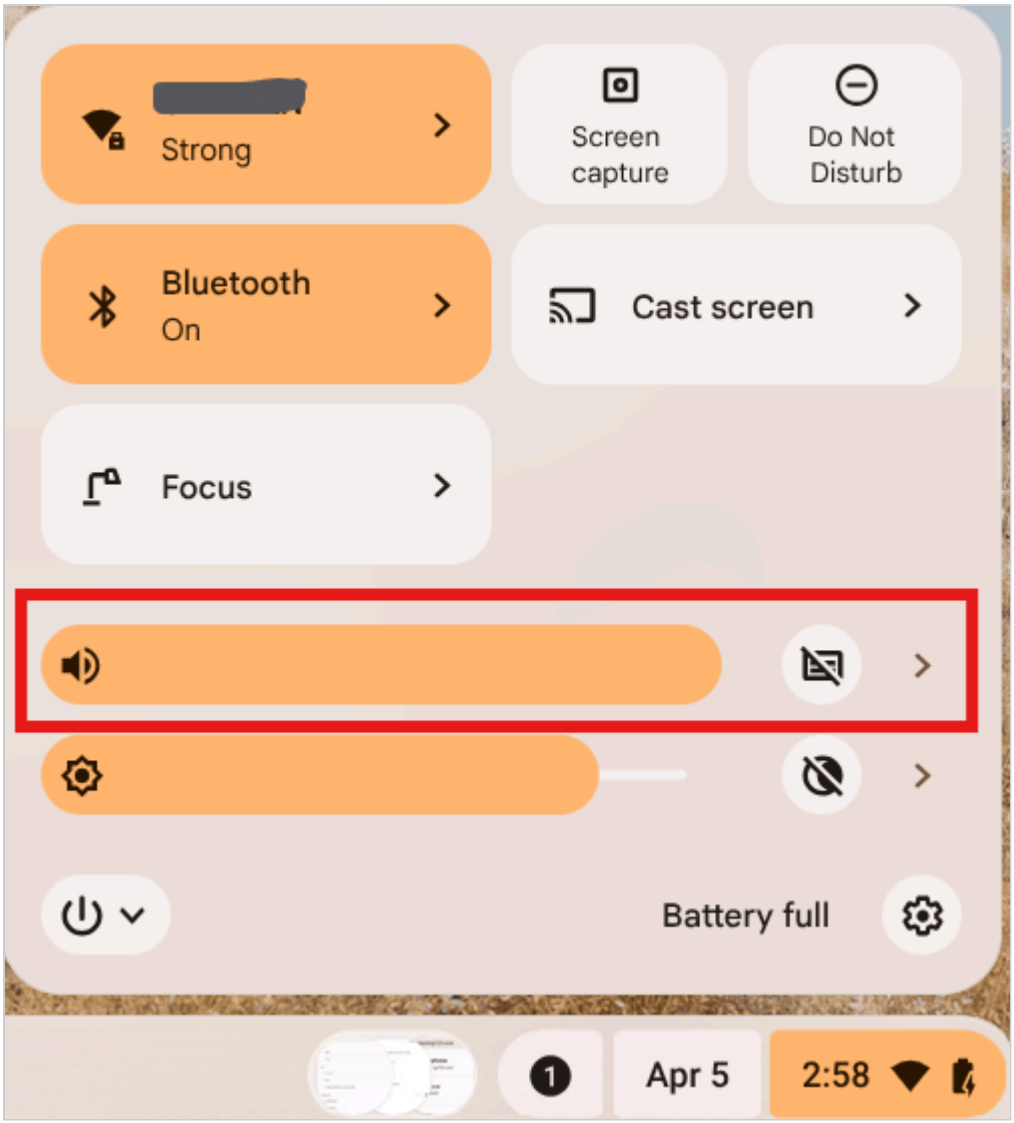
6. Use the System Tray Audio Panel

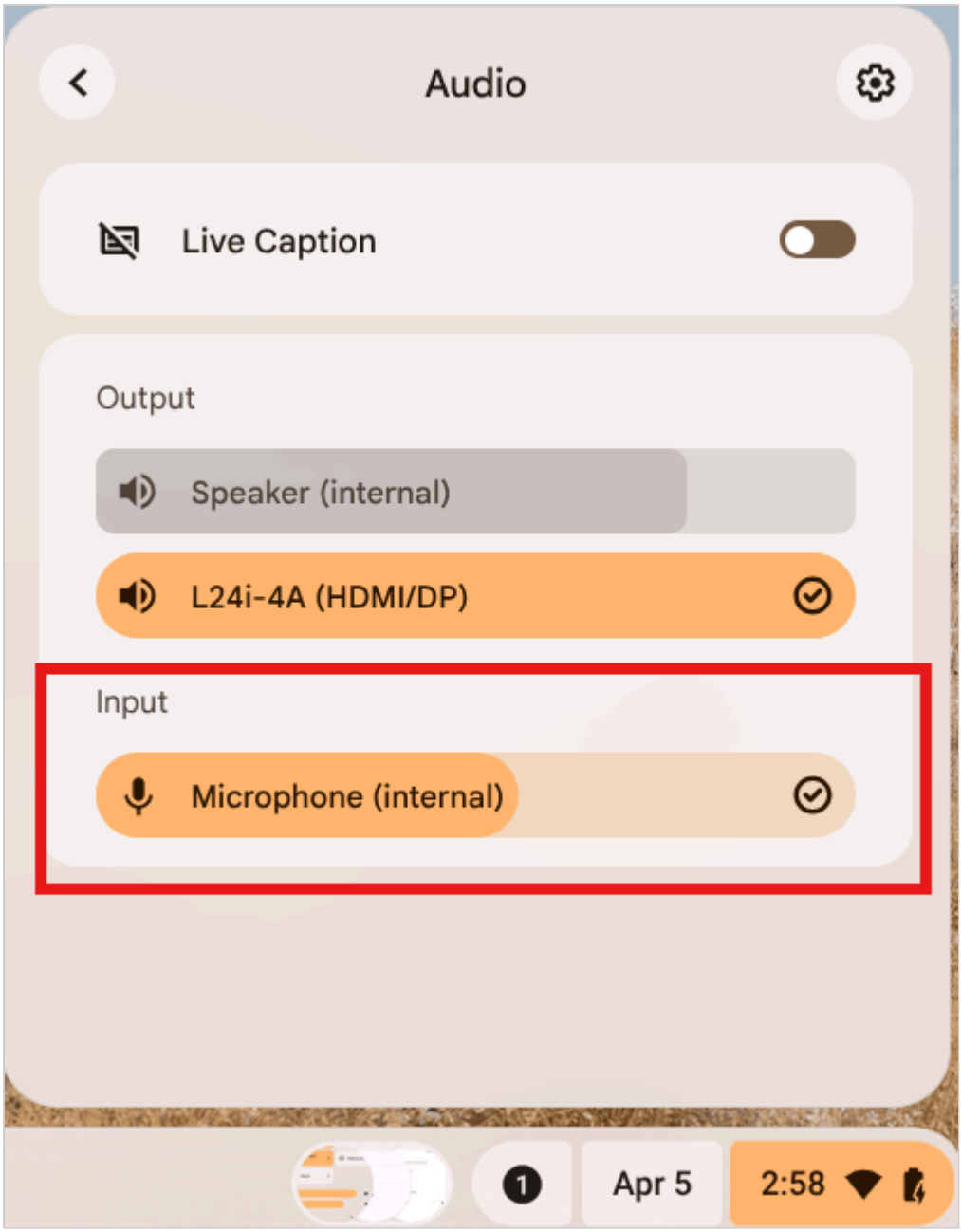
The system tray provides a faster route to switching microphone input without navigating the full Settings menu.

1. Click the **clock** in the bottom-right corner to open the quick settings panel.
2. Locate the audio row — identified by the speaker icon with a ">" arrow on the right.



Click the clock to open the system tray. Find the audio row and click the ">" arrow on the right.

3. Click the **">" arrow** to expand the audio panel.



The expanded audio panel. Under Input, select the microphone to use. The active device is indicated by a checkmark.

4. Under **Input**, select *Microphone (internal)*, or the relevant external device if connected.
5. Close the tray and test the microphone again.

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7. Restart Your Chromebook

A full system restart resolves a range of audio glitches, stuck permissions, and audio driver issues that may not respond to settings changes alone. This step is recommended after any configuration change.

1. Click the clock in the bottom-right corner.
2. Click the power icon in the quick settings panel.
3. Click **Restart** — not *Sign out* and not *Shut down*.
4. Wait for the Chromebook to fully restart, then log in and test the microphone.

If the microphone functions correctly after a restart but the problem recurs, a specific extension or application is likely interfering. Section 9 (Guest Mode) provides a method to identify the cause.

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8. Check for a Muted Keyboard Shortcut

Chromebooks include a dedicated microphone mute key in the top function row, which can be activated unintentionally on compact keyboard layouts. The key is identifiable by a microphone icon with a line through it, typically located in the F7–F9 area of the top row. Pressing it once toggles the mute state.

When muted, some Chromebook models display a microphone icon with a red slash in the system tray. Clicking that icon unmutes the device.

In addition to the hardware mute key, applications such as Google Meet and Zoom have independent mute controls within their own interfaces. Confirm that the microphone is not muted at the application level before concluding the issue is system-wide.

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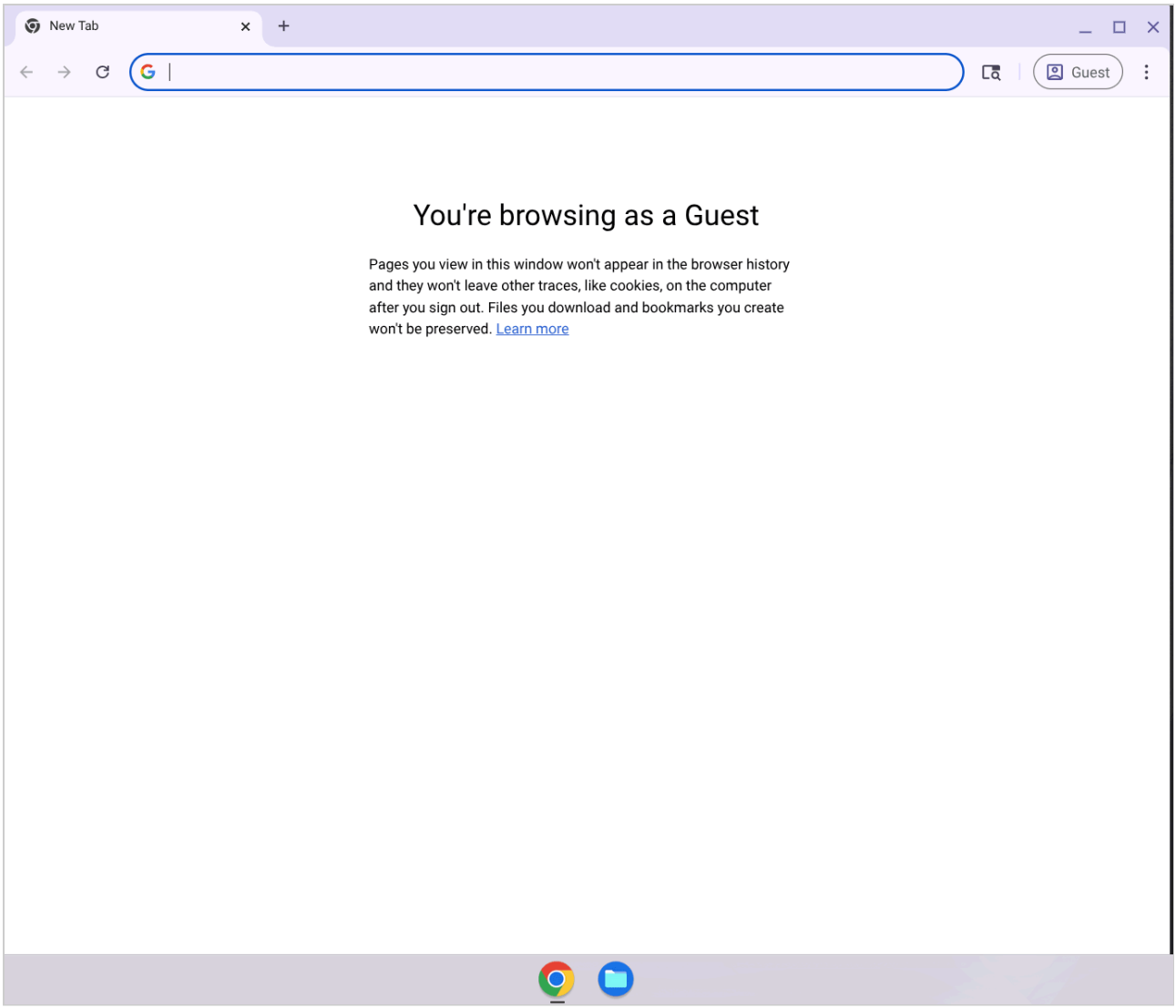
9. Try Guest Mode to Isolate the Problem

If the microphone functions in the browser test but fails in a specific application, or if it works immediately after a restart but stops again, a Chrome extension or profile-specific setting is the likely cause. Guest Mode provides a clean environment to confirm this.

1. Click the clock, then click your profile picture or name.
2. Click **Sign out**.
3. On the login screen, click **Browse as Guest** (bottom-left).


New Tab
Guest
You're browsing as a Guest
Pages you view in this window won't appear in the browser history and they won't leave other traces, like cookies, on the computer after you sign out. Files you download and bookmarks you create won't be preserved. Learn more

Guest Mode opens a clean Chrome session with no extensions and no profile settings. If the microphone works here, an extension is causing the problem in the main profile.

4. In Guest Mode, navigate to the microphone test and check whether it functions.

Interpreting the result:

- **Microphone works in Guest Mode** — an extension or profile-specific setting is blocking it in the main account. Return to the main account, open `chrome://extensions`, and disable extensions one at a time until the cause is identified.
- **Microphone does not work in Guest Mode** — the problem is not profile-related. It is a ChromeOS-level issue or a hardware fault. Continue with Section 10 onwards.

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10. School or Work-Managed Chromebooks

Chromebooks managed by a school, university, or employer may have microphone access restricted through an administrator-enforced device policy. This is common on institutional devices.

Indicators that a device is managed:

- A message at the bottom of the login screen reads: "This device is managed by..."
- Certain Settings options are greyed out or absent
- Chrome displays a building or briefcase icon in the toolbar

Administrator-enforced policies cannot be overridden by the user. Contact the relevant IT helpdesk or IT support team and request that microphone access be permitted for the required sites or applications. There is no user-level workaround for policy-enforced restrictions.

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11. Test an External Microphone

If the software-based fixes have not resolved the issue, testing with an external microphone determines whether the built-in microphone hardware is faulty.

Connecting an external microphone:

- **USB microphone** — connect to any available USB port. ChromeOS detects the device automatically. Select it via the system tray audio panel under Input.
- **3.5mm headset** — connect to the headphone jack. The device must be a headset with a combined microphone and headphone connector; standard headphones will not provide microphone input.
- **Bluetooth headset** — navigate to Settings → Bluetooth, pair the device, then select it in the audio input panel.

After connecting, open the microphone test and verify the external device.

Interpreting the result:

- **External microphone works** — the built-in Chromebook microphone is likely faulty. Use the external device as a workaround, or contact the manufacturer regarding repair.
- **External microphone also fails** — the problem is within ChromeOS or Chrome configuration, not the hardware. Continue with Section 12.

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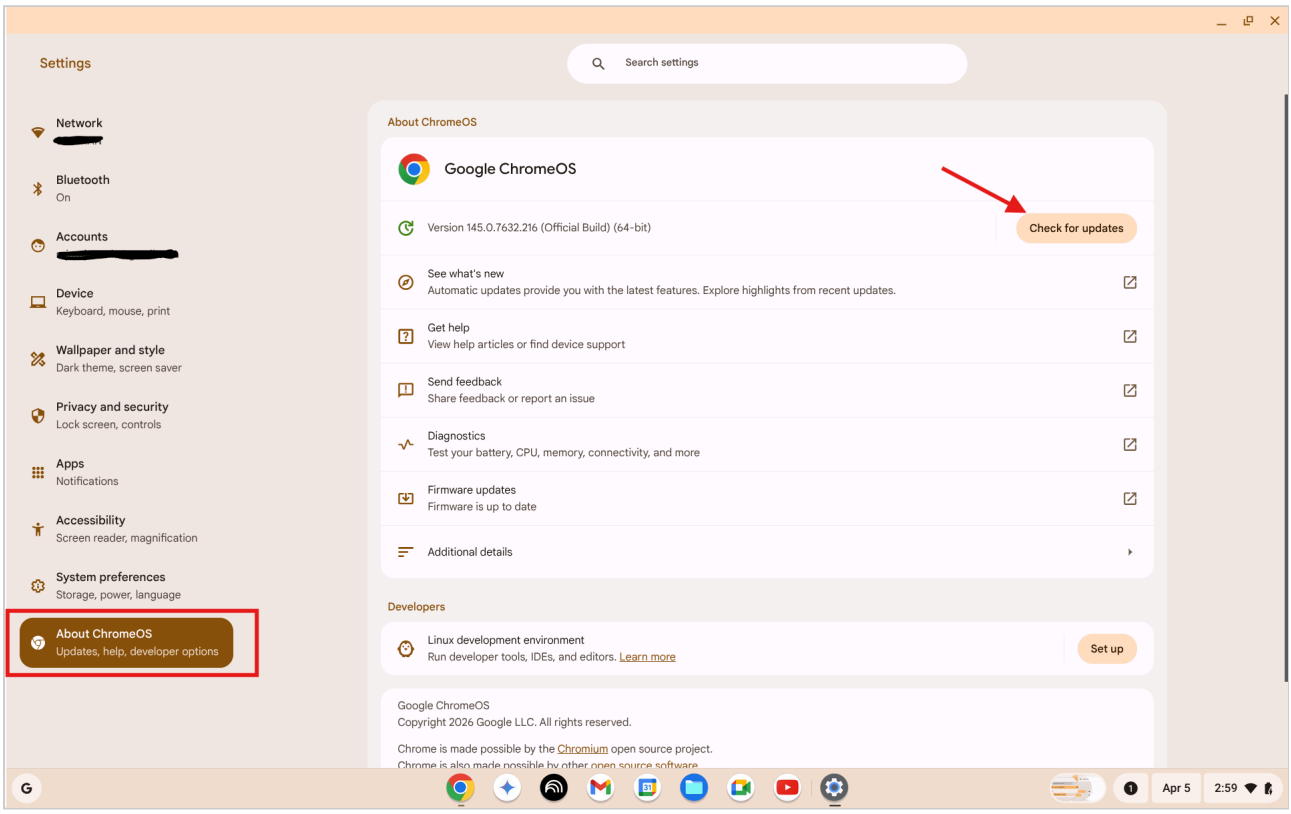
12. Update ChromeOS

Audio regressions introduced in earlier ChromeOS releases may be resolved in subsequent updates. A pending system update may be the source of the problem.

1. Click the clock, then click the gear icon (Settings).
2. In the left panel, click **About ChromeOS**.



Settings → About ChromeOS. Click "Check for updates". If an update is available, install it and restart.

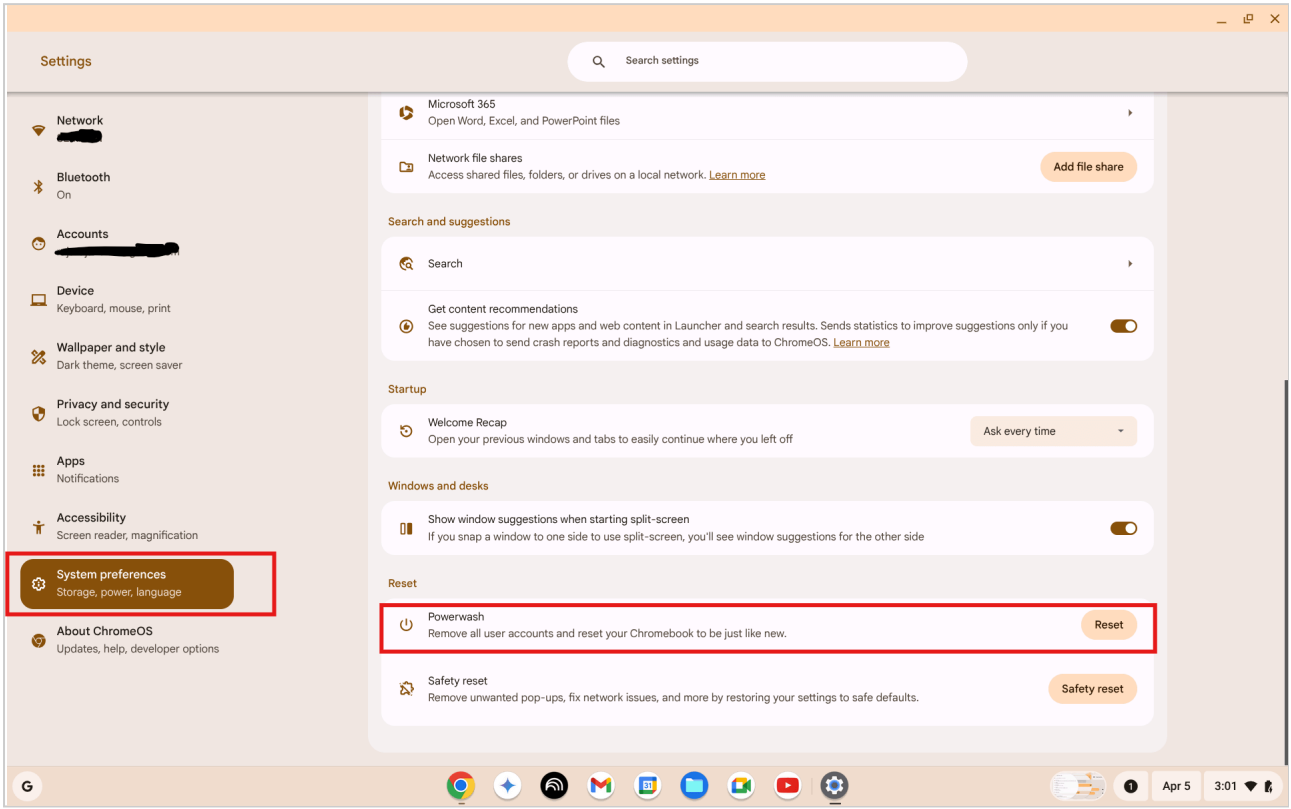
3. Click **Check for updates**.
4. If an update is available, click **Restart to update**.
5. After the restart, test the microphone again.

13. Powerwash (Factory Reset — Last Resort)

Powerwash performs a factory reset, removing all local accounts, files, settings, and extensions from the device. Google account data stored in the cloud — including Drive files, Gmail, and bookmarks — is not affected and will sync automatically upon sign-in after the reset.

This step should only be taken after all other options have been exhausted.

1. Ensure any locally stored files are backed up to Google Drive.
2. Click the clock → Settings → **System preferences**.
3. Scroll to the **Reset** section and click **Reset** next to Powerwash.


Settings
Search settings
Network
Bluetooth
On
Accounts
Device
Keyboard, mouse, print
Wallpaper and style
Dark theme, screen saver
Privacy and security
Lock screen, controls
Apps
Notifications
Accessibility
Screen reader, magnification
System preferences
Storage, power, language
About ChromeOS
Updates, help, developer options
Microsoft 365
Open Word, Excel, and PowerPoint files
Network file shares
Access shared files, folders, or drives on a local network. Learn more
Add file share
Search and suggestions
Search
Get content recommendations
See suggestions for new apps and web content in Launcher and search results. Sends statistics to improve suggestions only if you have chosen to send crash reports and diagnostics and usage data to ChromeOS. Learn more
Startup
Welcome Recap
Open your previous windows and tabs to easily continue where you left off
Ask every time
Windows and desks
Show window suggestions when starting split-screen
If you snap a window to one side to use split-screen, you'll see window suggestions for the other side
Reset
Powerwash
Remove all user accounts and reset your Chromebook to be just like new.
Reset
Safety reset
Remove unwanted pop-ups, fix network issues, and more by restoring your settings to safe defaults.
Safety reset
Apr 5
3:01

Settings → System preferences → Reset → Powerwash. Click Reset to begin. This action cannot be undone.

4. Confirm the reset. The Chromebook restarts and wipes itself.
5. Set up the device again and sign in to the Google account. Cloud data returns automatically.
6. Test the microphone before reinstalling any extensions.

If the microphone functions correctly after a Powerwash, an extension or corrupted profile setting was the cause. Re-add extensions one at a time to identify the problematic item.

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14. Identifying a Hardware Fault

A hardware fault should be considered if any of the following conditions apply:

- The microphone produces no response in any application, website, or the ChromeOS audio input level indicator
- The microphone fails in Guest Mode and after a Powerwash

- An external microphone functions correctly while the built-in microphone produces no output

Available options:

- **Under warranty** — contact the manufacturer (Google, Acer, HP, Lenovo, ASUS, or the relevant brand) and request a repair or replacement.
- **Out of warranty** — take the device to a qualified repair service, or use an external USB or Bluetooth microphone as a permanent alternative.
- **Managed device** — report the fault to the relevant IT team, who handle hardware replacements for institutional devices.

A browser-based microphone test can be used to confirm the hardware state prior to initiating a repair request. If the test shows zero input with the correct device selected and all software fixes applied, this constitutes strong evidence of a hardware fault.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why does the microphone work in one application but not another?

Each website and application maintains its own microphone permission in Chrome. Access granted to Google Meet does not automatically extend to Zoom or any other site. Check the lock icon in the address bar for the specific site in question, or review the blocked list at `chrome://settings/content/microphone`.

The microphone stopped working after a ChromeOS update. What should I do?

This can occur after certain system updates. Restart the Chromebook fully, then check ChromeOS Settings → Device → Audio to confirm that the correct input device is still selected — updates occasionally reset audio preferences. If the problem persists, check for a follow-up update in *About ChromeOS*.

Can a Chrome extension block microphone access?

Yes. Ad blockers, privacy extensions, and certain security tools can intercept or suppress microphone requests. Opening Guest Mode — which runs without any extensions — is the quickest way to test this. If the microphone functions in Guest Mode but not in the main profile, navigate to `chrome://extensions` and disable extensions one at a time until the cause is identified.

How can I test the Chromebook microphone without installing software?

A browser-based microphone test runs entirely within Chrome with no download, account, or installation required. Navigate to the test page, allow microphone access when prompted, and speak. If the volume bar responds, the microphone hardware is functioning.

Will a Powerwash resolve a microphone hardware fault?

No. Powerwash resets software configuration and user data but cannot repair physical hardware damage. If the microphone remains non-functional after a Powerwash, the built-in microphone component is likely faulty and requires professional repair. An external USB microphone can serve as a workaround in the interim.

Summary

The majority of Chromebook microphone problems are resolved at step 3 or 4 — a blocked permission in Chrome. Begin with a microphone test to establish whether the issue is hardware or software, then work through the numbered steps in order. For persistent issues, Guest Mode and a ChromeOS update cover most remaining cases. Powerwash and hardware diagnosis are available as final-stage options when all other avenues have been exhausted.